



## CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

Request for Proposals (RFP) to prepare a  
Redevelopment Plan for **Severance Town Center**

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Cleveland Heights, Ohio

RFP ISSUED: Friday, June 21, 2019

RESPONSE DEADLINE: Wednesday, July 31, 2019  
(5:00 pm EST)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio seeks to identify a qualified Urban Planning firm whom the City can work collaboratively with, to develop a Redevelopment Plan for the redevelopment of the Severance Town Center Mall property. It is anticipated that the completed Redevelopment Plan will include, but not be limited to, recommendations on future land uses, zoning, design standards, review of and recommendations regarding the process for approving future development plans, and a detailed Market Study, which will be used to attract a future Development Partner with the track record and expertise to redevelop this property. The Site is located southeast of the intersection of Mayfield and Taylor Roads, at 3640 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118, consisting of parcel numbers 683-25-001, 683-25-016, and 683-31-008.

Cleveland Heights is a diverse, progressive, inner-ring suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, with approximately 46,000 residents. The City's homes have architectural styles ranging from Craftsman bungalows and front porch Colonial Revival homes to historic mansions, new townhouses and condominiums. The City has a thriving arts community that includes galleries, theatre and dance companies, and Cain Park, a municipally owned arts and entertainment complex. The City is home to eleven commercial districts, including the Severance Town Center District, and over 500 small businesses.

Severance Town Center mall is approximately 57 acres in size and represents the City's largest business district. The property is owned by Namdar Realty and is managed by Mason Asset Management. Currently, the mall is a partially occupied commercial strip center that has been a property in decline for many years. However, as stated in the City's Master Plan, which was adopted in March of 2017, a primary goal is to redevelop Severance Town Center as a mixed-use and walkable area consistent with the character of Cleveland Heights.

As the City's largest business district, redevelopment of Severance Town Center could provide significant amenities and opportunities for economic growth for both the property owners and the City. The City of Cleveland Heights would look forward to the opportunity to work collaboratively with a development partner to identify and develop strategies and a plan to support the redevelopment of this critical site and once again establish it as one of the City's most popular and vibrant commercial districts.

The following information provides details about the Severance Town Center site and surrounding areas and establishes potential redevelopment goals for the property. The City anticipates entering into an Agreement with the selected consulting firm that will outline the roles and responsibilities of each party and establish timelines for completing the Redevelopment Plan for the site.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

In the City's Master Plan, the Severance Town Center site is designated as an area to be redeveloped as a planned mixed-use district, and the zoning of the site is consistent with the Plan by virtue of the current "S-1" Mixed-Use designation (Zoning Code Chapter 1143). This designation in the Master Plan is intended to encourage large scale, planned mixed-use development areas.

Unfortunately, the Severance Town Center site has seen a decline in economic vitality over a number of years. As a result, according to City records, the mall currently has a vacancy rate of close to 50%, with a total of 611,864 square feet of floor space, of which, 286,189 square feet is vacant (46.8% vacancy rate), and 22 store vacancies out of a total number of 40 storefronts. Growth is stagnant and the Site is not performing at its potential and is not the economic engine it once was and could be in the future. In addition, the property currently has a number of outstanding property condition violations that have been issued by the City.

From a positive perspective, the mall currently has successful retailers such as Home Depot and Dave's Market grocery store, as well as OfficeMax and Marshalls. On the perimeter of the site, institutional/governmental and health related anchors are located and have been established, consisting of Cleveland Heights City Hall, a United States Postal Service Office, and Metro Health, as well as several office buildings and multi-family residential developments.

In late 2016 and throughout 2017, the City worked with the National Resource Network, and their consultant HR&A, to provide a redevelopment strategy for Severance. Their activities included a site and market analysis, as well as discussions with local stakeholders. This effort resulted in the preparation of the **"Severance Town Center: Redevelopment Feasibility and Owner Engagement" Report** dated September, 2017. A link to this report is provided in the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this RFP.

In the City's opinion, based on marketing research provided by HR&A Consultants, the opportunity exists to create a catalytic and transformative dense, vibrant, pedestrian friendly and unique commercial, office, residential or potentially mixed-use development that brings more people to the mall, and to the City of Cleveland Heights, and leverages the placemaking opportunities of the site. The site could then create positive long term and sustainable economic and fiscal benefits for mall ownership, the surrounding neighborhoods and the City overall.

## Photos of Current Conditions









## Photos of Surrounding Development



## **MARKET ANALYSIS - SUMMARY**

According to the market analysis presented in the **“Severance Town Center: Redevelopment Feasibility and Owner Engagement” Report**, there may be an opportunity for neighborhood scale or experience retail to service new, repositioned development at Severance. Convenience goods, experience retail, and entertainment uses should be supported by unique public spaces to create a sense of place at Severance. This could include uses such as convenience health/personal care, unique theater or activity retail, neighborhood restaurant, and public market/open space as part of a redeveloped Severance Town Center. Regarding office uses, repositioning at Severance may provide the opportunity to capture a portion of projected regional job growth.

New residential product shows much promise for demand growth in Cleveland Heights. The City is projected to see growth in both its 65 and older population (increase of 13% by 2021) and growth in upper income cohorts ranging from 8% growth in the “\$75,000 to \$99,000” annual income range, and a 16% increase in the “over \$100,000” annual income range also by 2021. Indeed, for-sale residential product near Severance Town Center has performed well post the 2008 recession. Some of the most attractive recent for-sale residential development in the City has been built near Severance Town Center including the Courtyards at Severance and Bluestone. By repositioning Severance as a mixed-use center the site has the opportunity to attract significant new development.

To summarize, the City is projected to see growth among older demographic segments and in households earning relatively higher incomes. The ability to capture growth in this population segment is contingent upon creating a walkable development, in close proximity to vibrant public space, as well as convenient and experience oriented retail. Redevelopment of the Severance Town Center to take advantage of these trends will require a complete repositioning and re-branding of the mall site to allow for new mixed-use development and increased capture of limited regional population growth. Therefore, the development of a land use Redevelopment Plan specific for the Severance Town Center Site is a critical step in attracting a qualified Development Partner to redevelop this property.



## **REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Per the findings in the “**Severance Town Center: Redevelopment Feasibility and Owner Engagement**” Report, the City believes there is an opportunity for catalytic redevelopment at Severance Town Center based on the following matrix:

Severance Town Center requires <b>REPOSITIONING &amp; RE-BRANDING</b>	Comprised of <b>RESIDENTIAL-ANCHORED MIXED-USE</b>
Supported by <b>EXPERIENCE-ORIENTED RETAIL MIX</b>	Integrated with <b>CENTRAL PUBLIC/PARK SPACE</b>

The Report suggests that an effective approach would be comprised of two concurrent strategies consisting of:

- I. A multi-phase Town Center Development consisting of investment in the site resulting in new street and/or park/open space infrastructure; and to engage a development partner through the release of a Request for Qualifications and Preliminary Development Proposals (RFQ/RFP) to lead the development of a new, residential-anchored mixed use town center;
- II. Coordinated Mall Repositioning consisting of working collaboratively with mall ownership to reposition tenant mix at the Town Center; and establishing an expedited approval process for tenants that meet the City’s vision for site redevelopment. The City and mall ownership would work collaboratively to rebrand Severance consistent with the City’s image of the site. In addition, there is the need to reinvest in the repositioning of the current mall components.

The following aerial map illustrates that the currently underutilized parking areas surrounding the mall provide the best opportunity for new residential development while retaining and building on current anchors such as Home Depot, Dave’s Market, Cleveland Heights City Hall, the U.S. Post Office and MetroHealth in order to advance efforts at mall repositioning:



In summary, the City is seeking to identify a qualified Urban Planning firm whom the City can work collaboratively with, to develop a Redevelopment Plan for redevelopment of the Severance Town Center property. The completed Redevelopment Plan will be used to attract a Development Partner with the track record and expertise to redevelop the property by simultaneously pursuing a **Multi-Phase Town Center Development** located in the existing parking areas surrounding the mall, and a **Coordinated Mall Repositioning** associated with the existing mall.

It should be noted that the City has utilized innovative and highly effective economic development incentive programs in the past that are available to facilitate the redevelopment of the mall, including the potential use of **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** and the City-wide **Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax abatement program**. We believe such programs, and other economic development programs, may be highly impactful for the redevelopment of Severance.

We believe that a redevelopment plan that increases the number of residents in close proximity to the mall will benefit both the return on investment and future profitability of the mall for its owners, and will benefit the City by attracting new residents and tax base expansion.

# SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals submitted for consideration shall include, but not be limited to, the following components. If consultant teams consist of more than one company, please provide the requested qualifications for all companies.

## 1. CONSULTANT TEAM INFORMATION

Provide a narrative description of the proposed consultant team, including the following:

- Brief history and overview of your company and your experience with urban planning projects such as redevelopment plan projects having similar characteristics with the proposed project, such as planning for distressed or underperforming mall or commercial properties. Please cite specific examples of projects you have worked on that meet this criteria;
- Identification of key members of your planning team, their proposed roles for this project, and their qualifications and experience;
- Summary of the team's past experience working together; and
- Identification of the principal person who will speak for the planning team and any other key participants who will be involved in negotiating the project terms.

## 2. RELEVANT PLANNING EXPERIENCE

Describe at least three recent urban planning projects that your company has successfully completed or have had adopted and are being utilized by a public entity to guide development decisions. Include a project summary, location, project cost, planning challenges you faced and solutions reached, and references for each project. List planning team members and their role in each project. Experience preparing market studies, design guidelines and sustainability considerations should also be provided in your response, as well as how the plan can effectively be implemented.

## 3. FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Present evidence of your company/team's ability to financially commit to this project and provide the deliverables being requested.

## 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The planning process must be inclusive and involve input not only from the City administration and City Council, but adjacent residents, property and business owners, as well as the greater Cleveland Heights community. Please describe your approach to effective



community engagement for this project and your experience successfully navigating this process with previous projects.

**5. PROPOSED PROCESS, TIMELINES AND ESTIMATED COST:**

Having the site reach its full development potential quickly is a primary goal of the City. Please describe the anticipated timelines and critical path for developing the Redevelopment Plan for the site, specifically identifying dates for commencement and completion of key project activities. Please provide your projected cost for preparing this Redevelopment Plan with associated Market Study.

**6. MINORITY AND FEMALE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES INCLUSION**

The City encourages the participation of minority-owned and female-owned business enterprises in the redevelopment planning of the site. Please describe any efforts you have made on past projects to include minority-owned and female-owned businesses and any steps you intend to take to include minority-owned and female-owned businesses for this project.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

The goal of this RFP process is to identify the planning consulting team possessing the vision, expertise, and financial resources to develop a Redevelopment Plan for the site.

It is anticipated that submittals will be evaluated by a review team composed primarily of City staff and based upon, but not limited to, the criteria below. To facilitate review of your company's submission, we suggest that the following items be specifically addressed in your response:

**Consultant Qualifications**

- Recent history of similar successful, high-impact urban planning projects;
- Strength of experience of the proposed planning consultant team assigned to this project;
- Proposed project cost;
- Adequate financial resources; and
- Community engagement approach.

## **EVALUATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE**

It is expected that the planning consulting teams whose submissions best meet the evaluation criteria established above will be selected for an interview with the review team.

Following the review team interviews, some or all of the planning consultant teams may be invited to present their qualifications and redevelopment plan proposals to City Council. City Council will make the final selection of a consultant. The following is the anticipated schedule for the evaluation and selection of a planning consultant team.

Milestone	Date (2019)
RFP available	6/21/2019
Deadline for submissions	7/31/2019
Interviews with & presentations from selected planning firms	September, 2019
Selection of successful project planning firm	September, 2019
1 <sup>st</sup> Community Engagement / Planning Session	TBD

The City intends to adhere to this selection process, but reserves the right to reject all submissions or deviate from the process, as necessary, to accomplish the goal of selecting the most qualified planning consultant for this important Site and to begin the redevelopment planning process as soon as is possible.

### **Confidentiality**

The City of Cleveland Heights complies with all applicable laws regarding public meetings and public records. The City will endeavor to maintain, but cannot guarantee, the confidentiality during the selection and review process of financial information or disclosures of the planning consultant or prospective users, provided that such confidential information shall be segregated into a separate volume in the original or any subsequent submission and shall be clearly marked "CONFIDENTIAL-TRADE SECRETS."

### **Rights Reserved by the City**

The City of Cleveland Heights reserves the right to reject any and all submittals, to negotiate with parties interested in planning for the redevelopment of the site, to change, without notice, the RFP and evaluation process, and to waive any formality in submissions whenever same is in the interest of the City of Cleveland Heights and its planning objectives.

## **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

To ensure that all potential respondents have access to the same information, all questions regarding this project shall be posed via e-mail to:

[stcredevelopmentplan@clvhts.com](mailto:stcredevelopmentplan@clvhts.com)

Questions and answers with general relevance will be posted on the following page of the City's website: [www.clevelandheights.com/stc](http://www.clevelandheights.com/stc). Questions and answers will be posted weekly. Timothy M. Boland, Director of Economic Development, is the single point of contact for any questions related to this RFP. Please do not contact anyone else at the City to discuss this RFP.

Planning consultant teams shall submit 15 identical bound hard copies, one unbound hard copy, and one electronic copy. Packages must be clearly labeled "Planning Firm Responses to Severance Town Center Redevelopment Plan RFP." Documents containing confidential financial or trade secrets should be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly labeled "CONFIDENTIAL-TRADE SECRETS." The City will endeavor to maintain but cannot guarantee confidentiality of these documents.

Qualifications packages and supporting materials must be received by **July 31, 2019 at 5:00 pm EST** to be considered. Packages should be addressed to:

**The City of Cleveland Heights**  
**Attn: Timothy M. Boland, Director of Economic Development**  
**40 Severance Circle**  
**Cleveland Heights, OH 44118**

**P 216-291-4857**  
**[stcredevelopmentplan@clvhts.com](mailto:stcredevelopmentplan@clvhts.com)**

The electronic copy should be e-mailed to [stcmasterplan@clvhts.com](mailto:stcmasterplan@clvhts.com) or delivered on a flash drive with the paper transmission.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following documents provide additional information about the Site and surrounding area and are accessible via the City of Cleveland Heights website: [www.clevelandheights.com/stc](http://www.clevelandheights.com/stc).

- The City's Master Plan;
- Zoning Code – Contact the Planning Department with specific questions at 216-291-4878;
- "Severance Town Center: Redevelopment and Owner Engagement" Report, prepared by HR&A Consultants, 2017;
- "S-1" Zoning Board of Control Project Review Process;
- Aerial Map of the project site.

**Relevant Websites:** [www.clevelandheights.com](http://www.clevelandheights.com)



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